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It wasn't roaring, it was weeping

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It wasn't roaring it was weeping

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Andrea Domínguez

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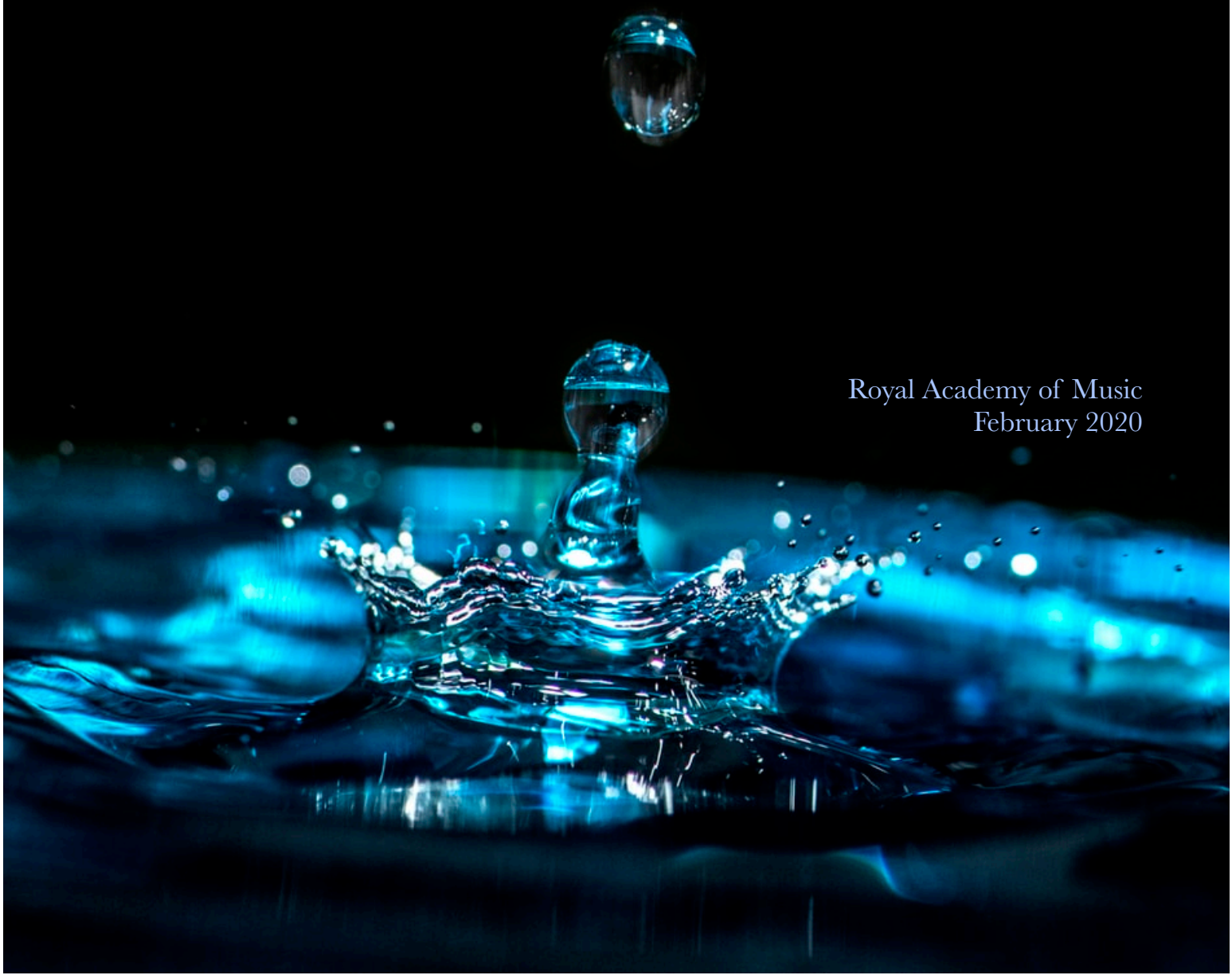
https://www.lazarliebenberg.com/it-wasn-t-roaring-it-was-weeping



Royal Academy of Music
February 2020

Performance notes

Dry set up

Equipment list:

2 Timpani (C-A, Bb-F)

3 Wine glasses (tuned by filling with water, high, middle, low. Should **not** be tuned to the equal tempered scale. Intervals need not be uniform.)

1 Water jug (empty)

2 Plates (small and large)

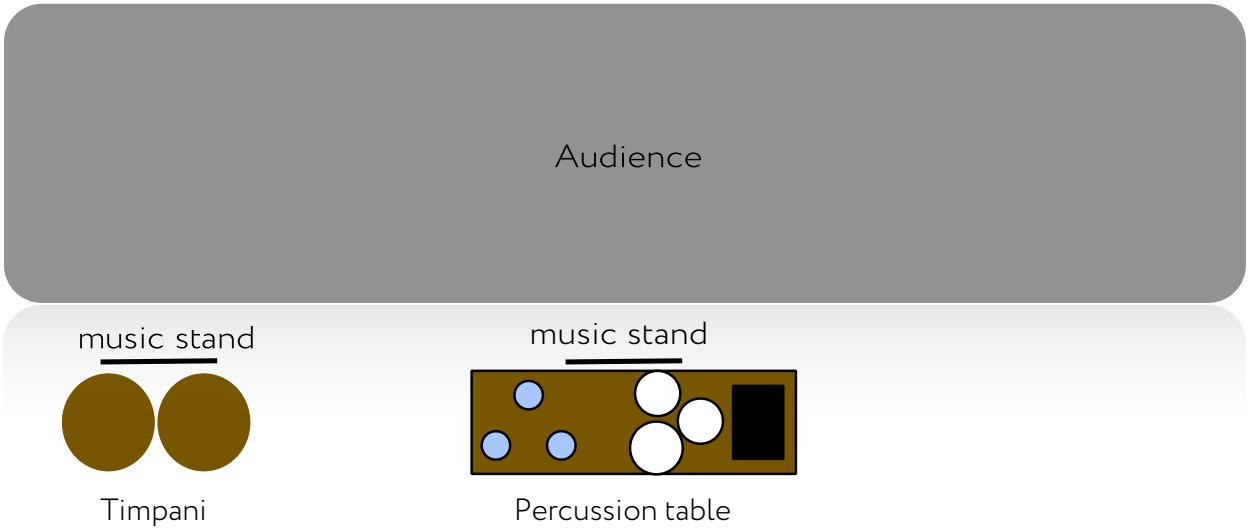
1 Metal baking tray

2 Superball friction mallets

2 Bamboo beaters

2 Felt beaters

Layout:



Description:

Timpani need to be to the side of the stage with the percussion table in the centre. They need not be in line horizontally. The percussion table should be lined with felt with the instruments arranged so that the 3 wine glasses are on one side and the jug, 2 plates and metal sheet are on the other. The objects can be clamped or held against the table however the percussionist deems practical and helpful to their performance. Ensure the timpani are tuned to A (I.) and E (II.) before the start of the performance.

Superball mallets should be left by the side of the timpani while the bamboo and felt beaters should be left on the percussion table.

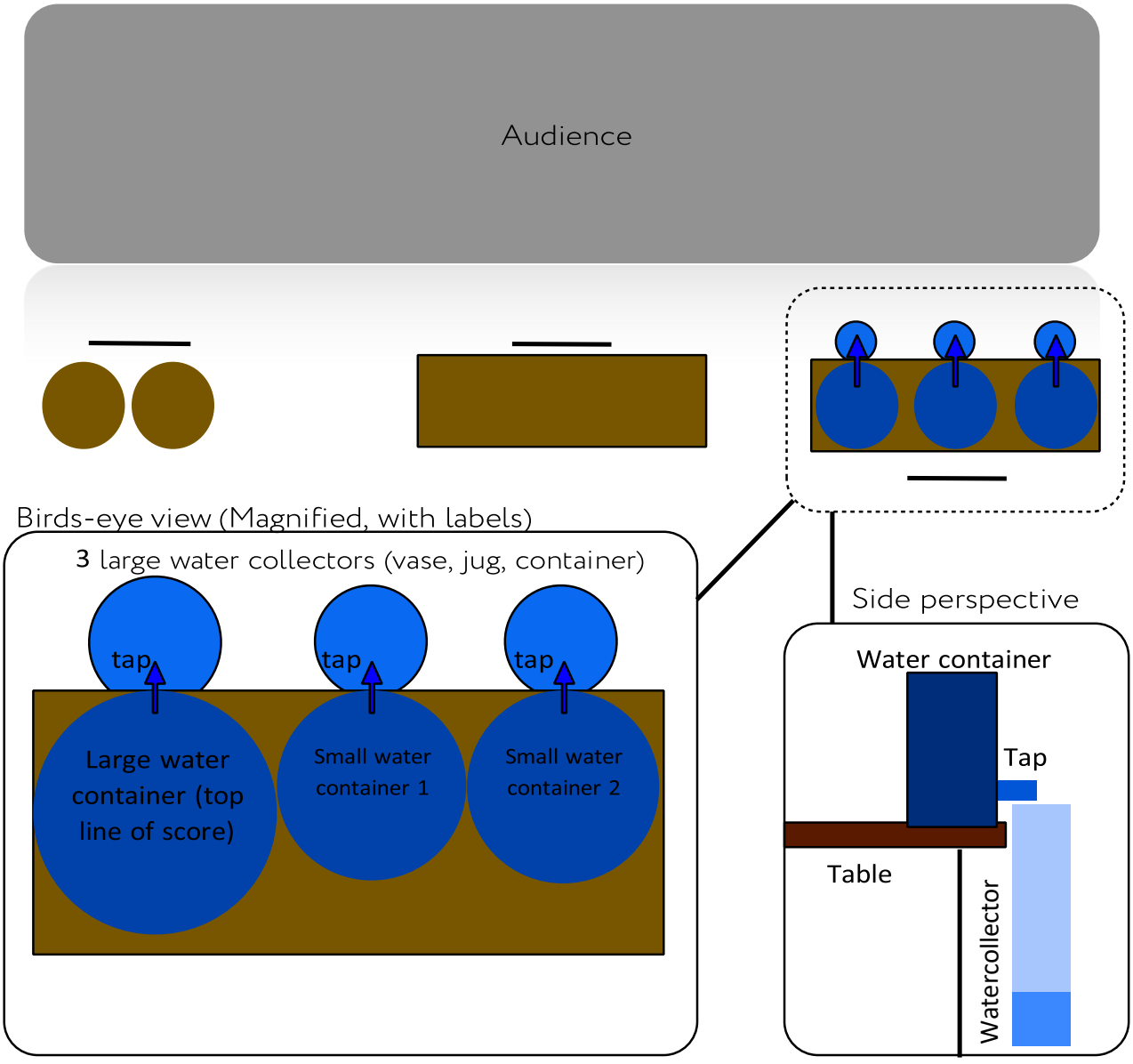
Wet set up

Equipment list:

3 Water containers with adjustable taps

3 Large, transparent water collectors (jugs/vases/containers with open tops)

Layout:



Description:

3 water containers with twisting taps are placed on a table side by side, taps facing the audience. Open-topped 'collectors' (vase, jug, other open topped water containers) are placed on the floor so that the taps drips directly from the containers on the table into them. If possible the mouth of the tap should be below the lip of the water collector so as to make spillage during a performance impossible however, even if this is impractical, there is next to no risk of any water leaving the system. The largest container corresponds to the top stave in the score, the other two are not differentiated and consist of the two lines marked 'water Container Small' or 'Wtr.C. S'.

In rehearsing the work, the percussionist needs to run a calibration performance to vaguely assess how much water needs to be in each container before the performance begins. The calibration need not be particularly accurate or precise as the piece has a robust finishing mechanism composed into it.

The two smaller containers require approximately enough water to be able to drain in about 2 minutes.

The larger container is slightly more complex. This container needs enough water to reach bar 148 with approximately enough water to last between 1 and 2 minute(s). This is best done in rehearsal and with some trial and error very achievable.

Water management is part of its innate challenge and risk in this piece. With a small amount of concentrated experimentation with their equipment these risks become very manageable.

Electronics set up

Equipment list:

3 Microphones (ideally with a cardioid polar pattern)

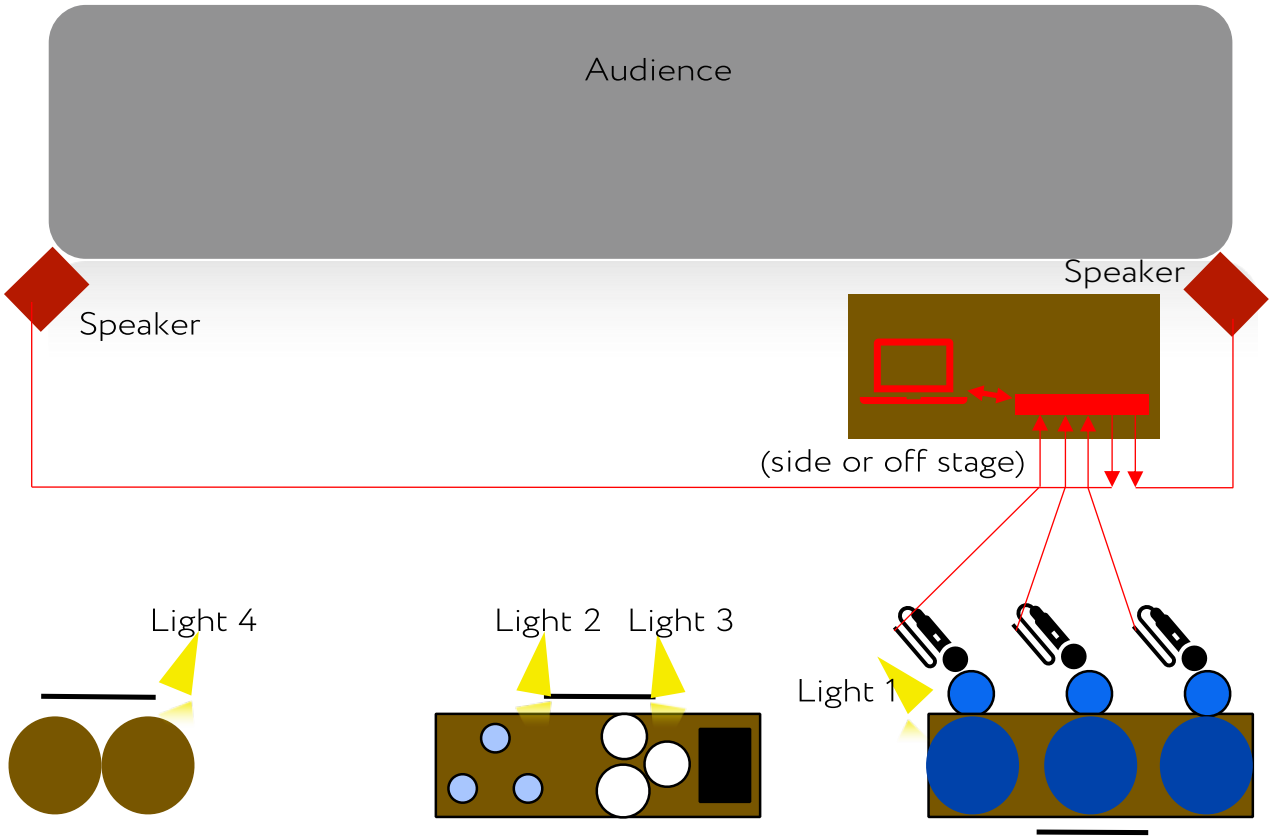
3 Microphone stands

5 xlr-xlr leads (2 of sufficient length to cross the width of the stage)

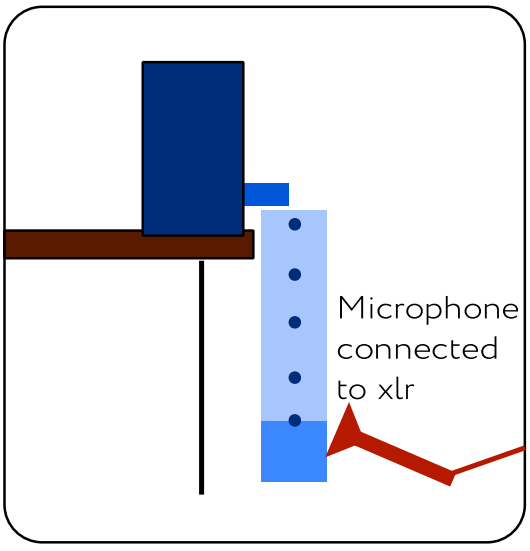
1 Audio interface (3 ins, 2 outs)

1 Computer (running Max/MSP)

Layout:



Side perspective for microphone positioning



Hardware:

The 3 microphones are aimed at the base of the water collectors (or wherever they can best pick up the loudest splash). All the mics run into an audio interface and then through a laptop running Max/MSP. For details of the Max patch please see the software section below. The speakers are placed as far forwards of the microphones as practical while still remaining in front of the first audience row. It is important the microphones are pointing as far away from the speakers as possible. Ideally, they should be directed away from the percussion table however this is of less concern.

Software:

If you wish to perform or record this piece please email the composer at lazar.liebenberg@gmail.com requesting the Max patch for *It wasn't roaring*. The software has two modes of operation; for solo percussionist or for percussionist and sound engineer. In the solo configuration, trigger the labelled toggle in the software and midi map an external controller (foot-pedal or series of pads) to each automated process (indicated in the score). The configuration is simpler with a sound engineer. Simply leave the toggle off and control the 3 faders (reverb, delay and feedback) manually.

With a sound engineer the mix needs to be constantly ridden—keeping the water droplets sound as loud as possible while avoiding unpleasant feedback. This will naturally result in low level feedback hums undulating throughout the performance and is part of the challenge and fragility of the work. In the solo mode this process is automated through a compressor (automatically activated when the solo configuration is triggered).

Lights:

Lights need not be of stage quality, simple desk lights will more than suffice. Their numberings (from 1 - 4) in the diagram above correspond to boxed numberings in the score with each light linked to a certain instrument.

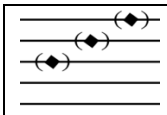
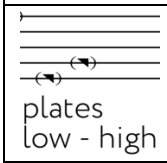
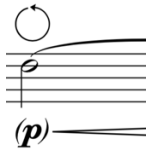
Light 1 should be focused across the taps of the water containers. Light 2 should be aimed at the wine glasses and away from the rest of the percussion table. Light 3 should focus on the other objects (2 plates, jug and metal sheet) and should similarly be angled slightly away

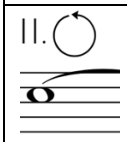
from light 2's territory so as to maximize their effectiveness. Light 4 should be aimed across the skin of the timpani.
Each light needs to be easily turned on and off by the percussionist, so their switches need to be within easy reach of the relative playing positions.

Before the piece begins the percussionist needs to be by the water containers (and the sound engineer ready to ride the main mix). The house lights are dimmed so the space is as dark as possible. The work starts with the percussionist turning on Light 1 and opening the tap of the large water container as directed in the score.

Notation

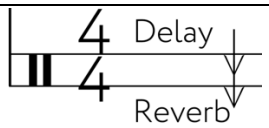
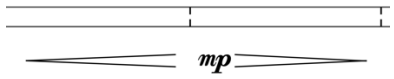
Percussionist

	Table percussion	3 upper lines of the stave (Dimond noteheads when hit)	Wine glasses, in ascending pitch.
		Two lower lines of the stave (Right angle triangles)	Plates, in ascending pitch.
		Upper and lower spaces of the stave (circle noteheads)	Water jug and steel baking tray respectively.
		Circular symbol above wine glass notes.	Rub a wetted finger along the rim of the wineglass
	Beaters	Box with an x headed beater	Bamboo beater
		Box with a open rectangle headed beater.	Felt beater

II. 	Timpani	Circular symbol above timpani notes	Rub a superball mallet along the skin of the drum, creating as smooth and consistent a tone as possible with as little grit as possible.

Note: the roman numerals correspond to the two different timpani.

Sound Engineer

	The electronics stave is made up of two lines, the upper one corresponds to the delay fader and the lower, the reverb. Arrows pointing down indicate the fader to be set to 0, while arrows up indicate full. Feedback instructions share the delay line as this process runs off the delay signal.
	Dynamics are intended only as vague indications. The electronics are, by design, unstable and hard to control

	therefore the dynamics are included to show shape and trajectory rather than rules.
	Diagonal arrows delineate where faders should be slowly raised or lowered. These are automated in the solo configuration of the patch.

Bar 115

The percussionist should continue at *fortissimo,* hitting the highest wine glass with the bamboo beater (with their left hand (LH)) at the same tempo as established in the previous. Very slowly, there should begin a *rallentando*, ostensibly ignoring the water drops for the first time in the piece. This should continue until minim triplets (against the water droplets) are reached. During the *rall.* the percussionist should pick up a felt beater in their right hand. Once the triplet minims are reached the percussionist should play 2 bars of them before arriving at bar 118 and continuing as usual. The jug should be continued to be hit with the bamboo beater while the lower line (the tray and 2 plates) should be sounded using the felt beater.

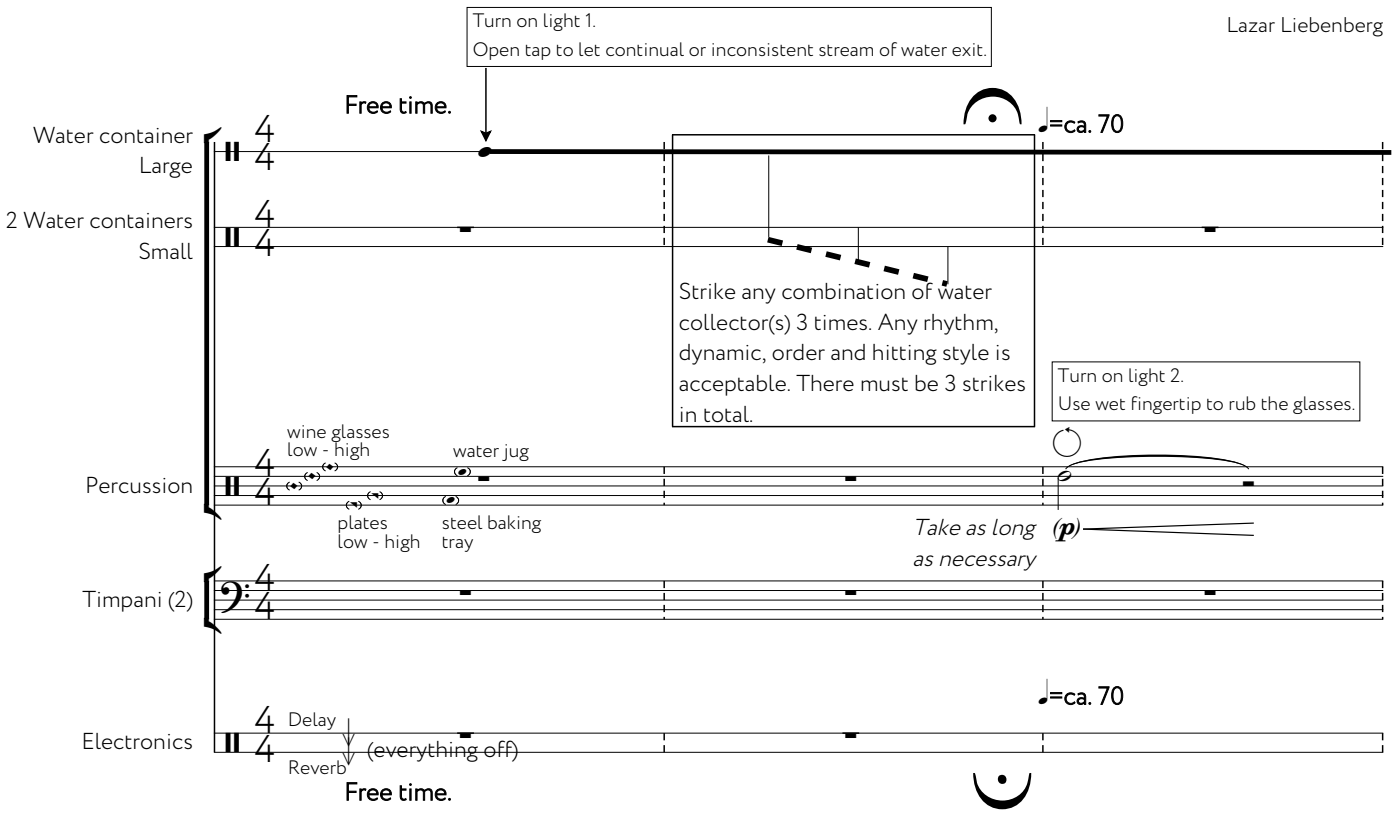
At the rest at the end of bar 125 - 126 the left hand should put the bamboo beater down and pick up another felt beater.

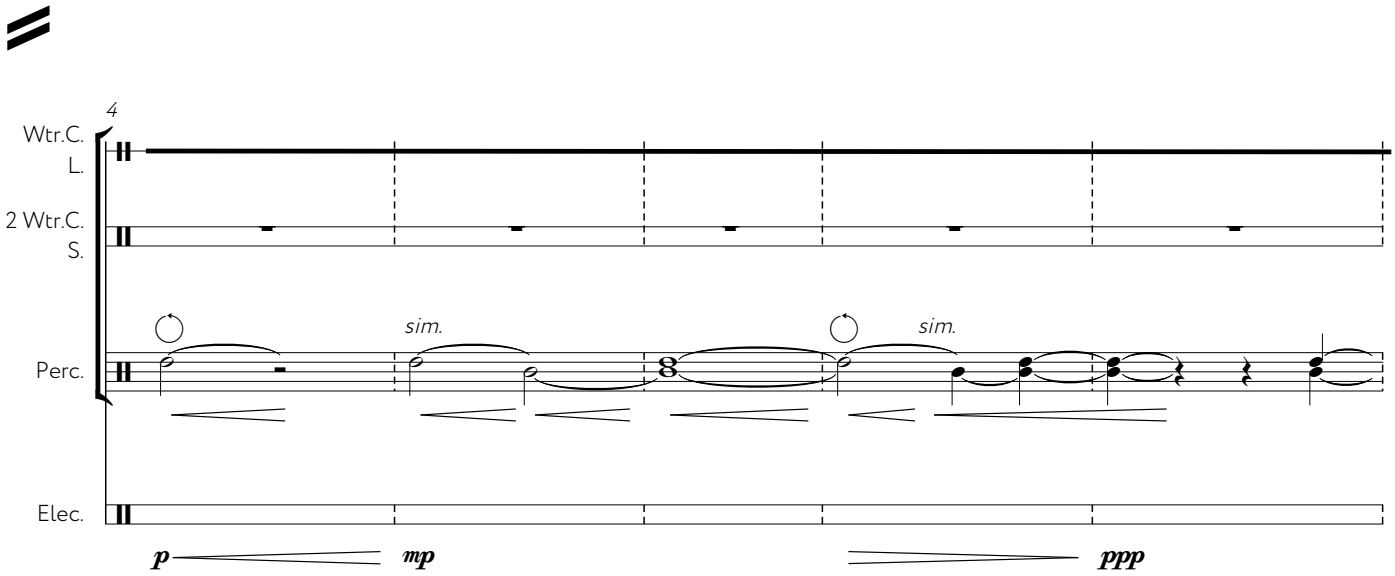
The end

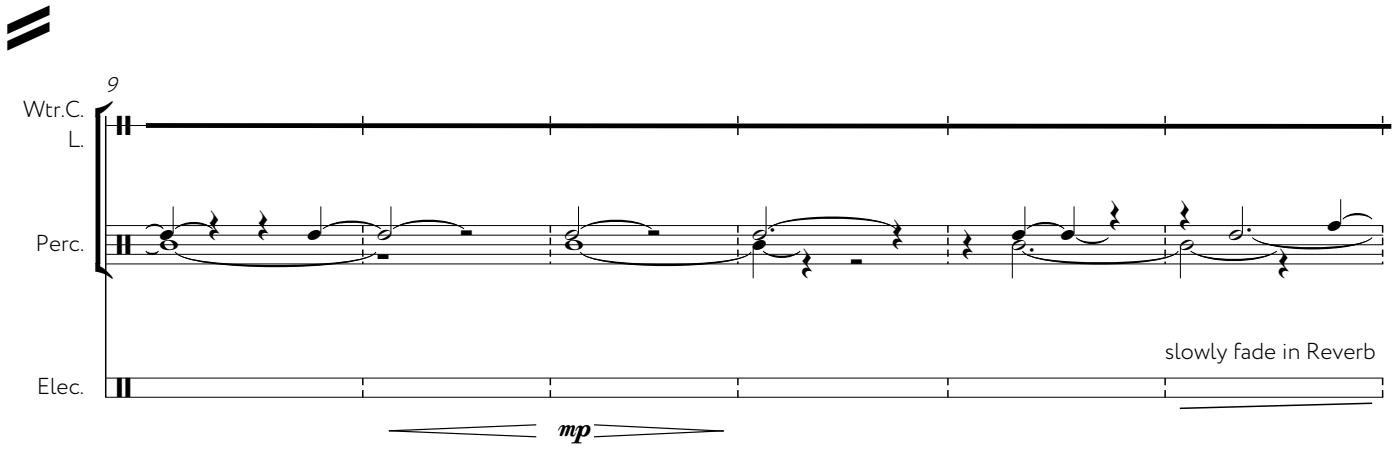
On reaching the box (b.191-199) continue playing unchanged. Keep repeating this box until all containers have finished dripping, as this happens stop playing and quietly switch off light 4 but do not dampen the sound. Allow the timpani sounds to reverberate as long as possible in the darkness before house lights come on. Should the drips stop before reaching the box continue through the box once and similarly end by turning off light 4 and letting the timpani sound ring for as long as possible.

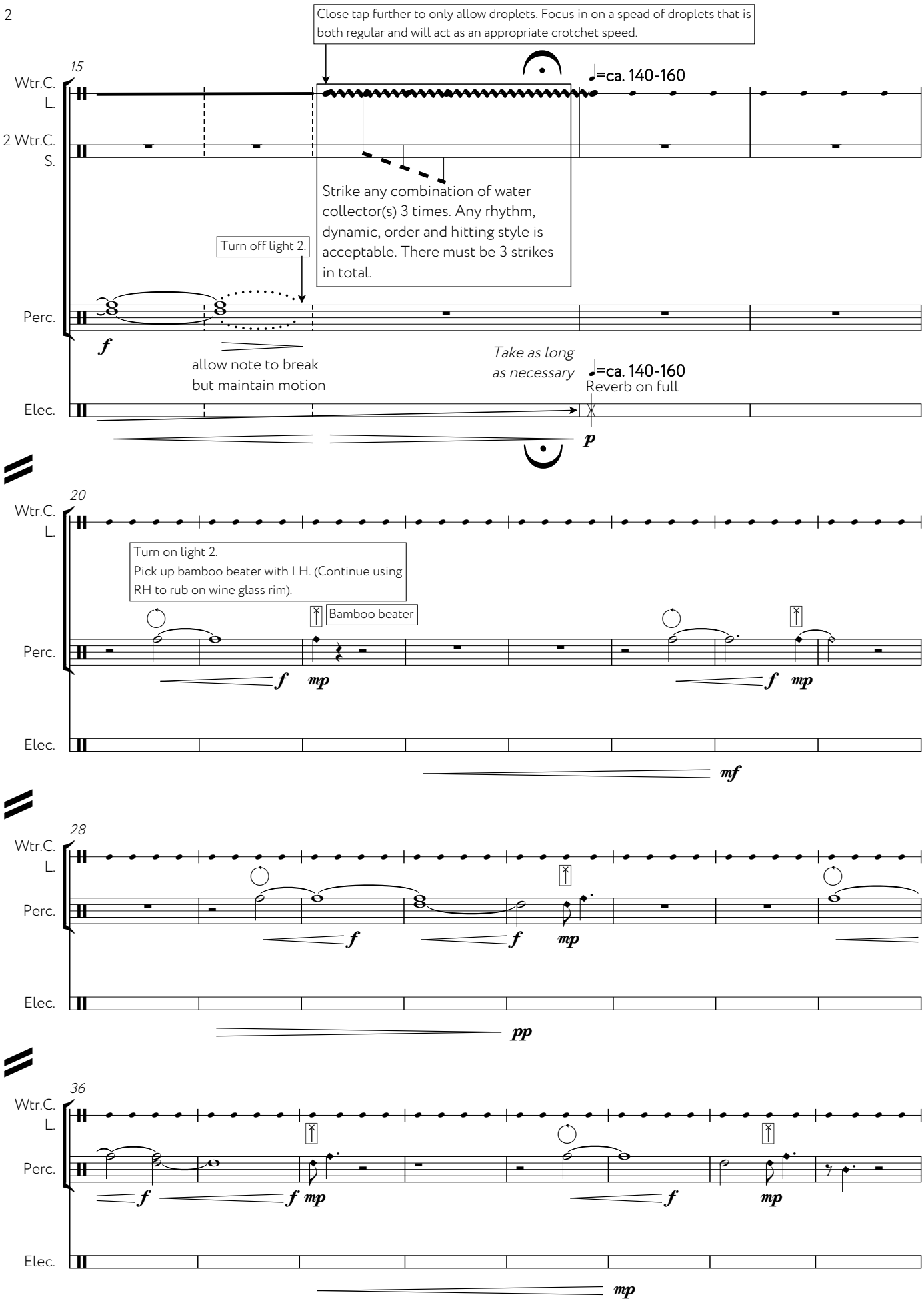
It wasn't roaring, it was weeping

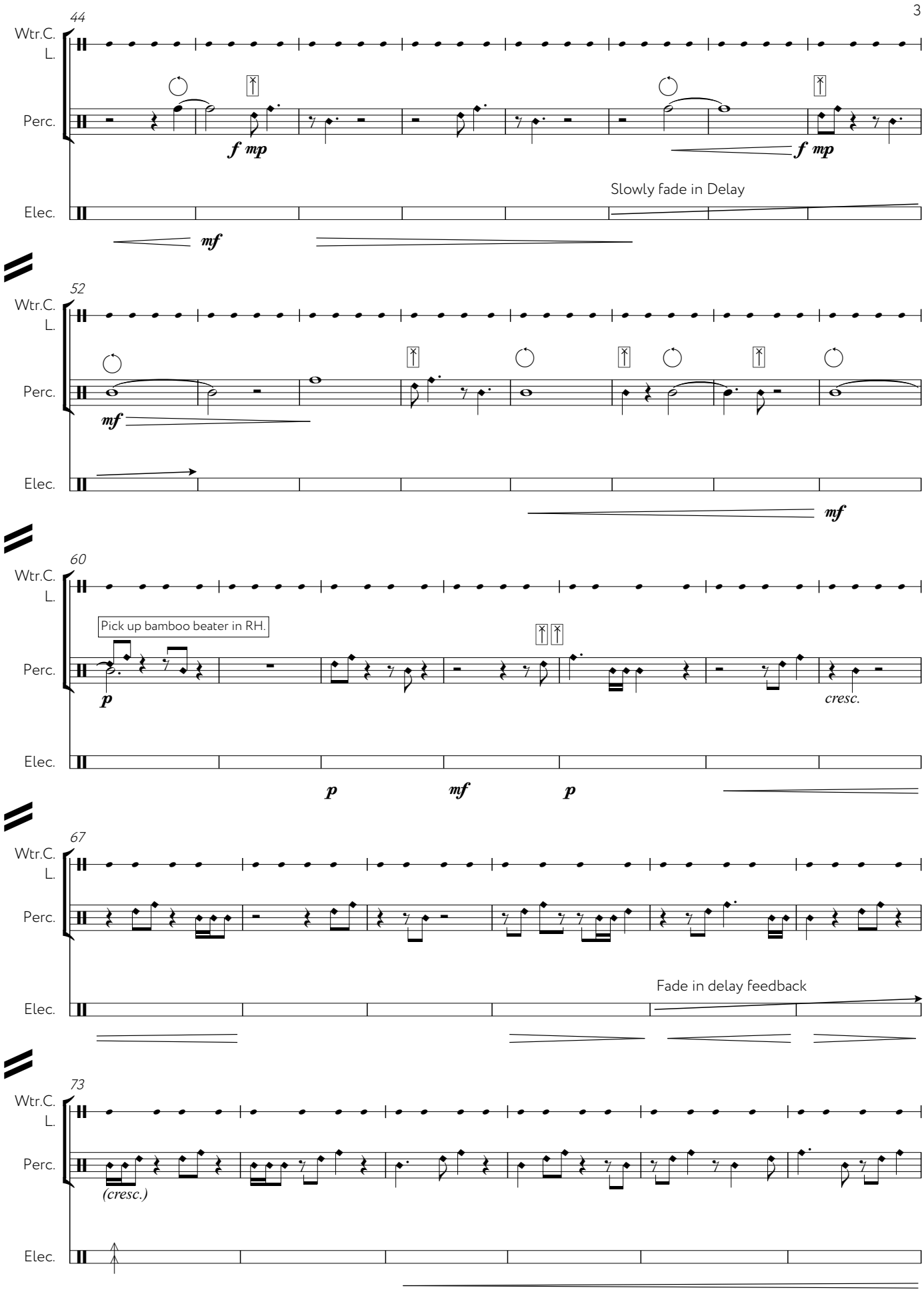
Lazar Liebenberg

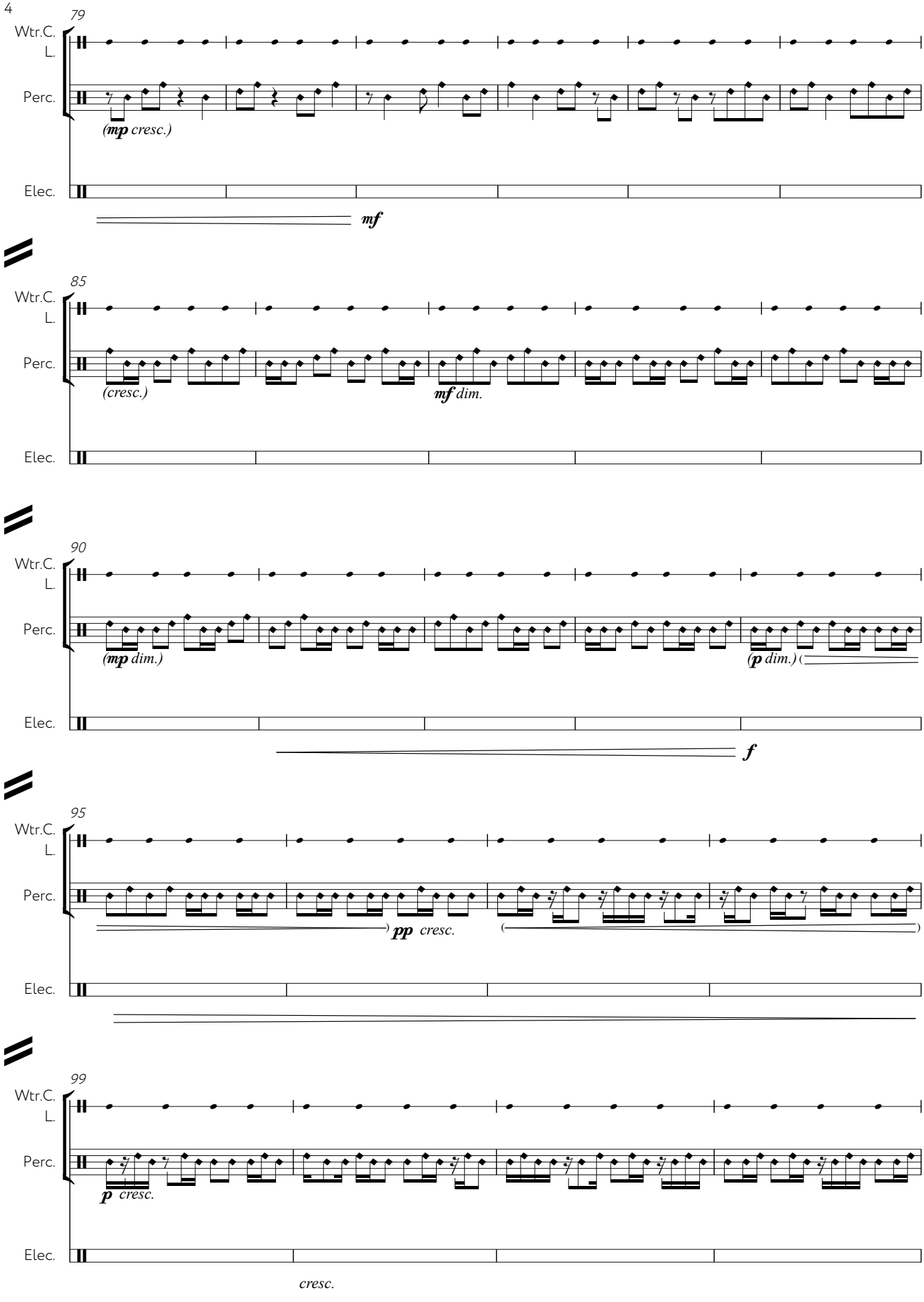


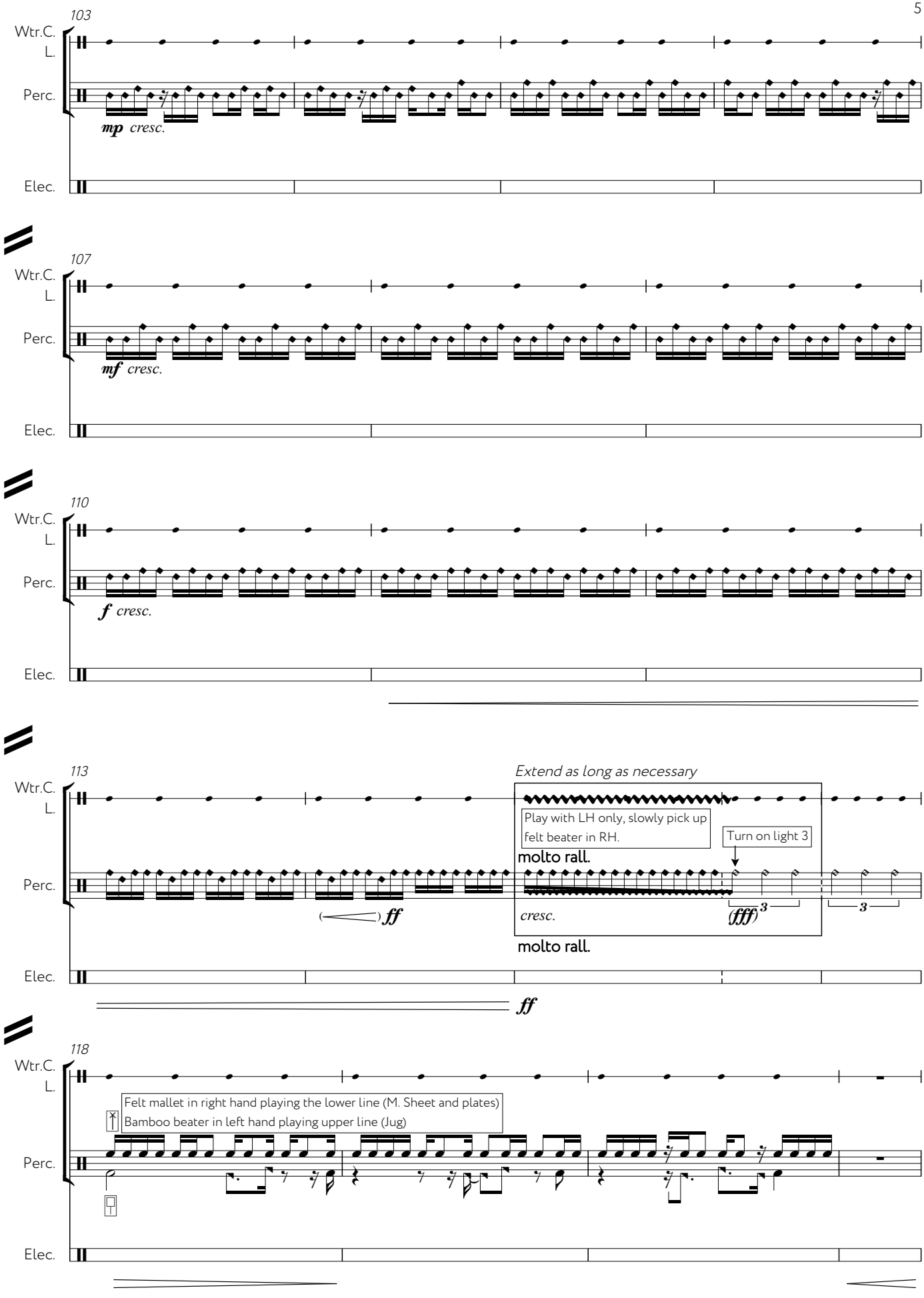


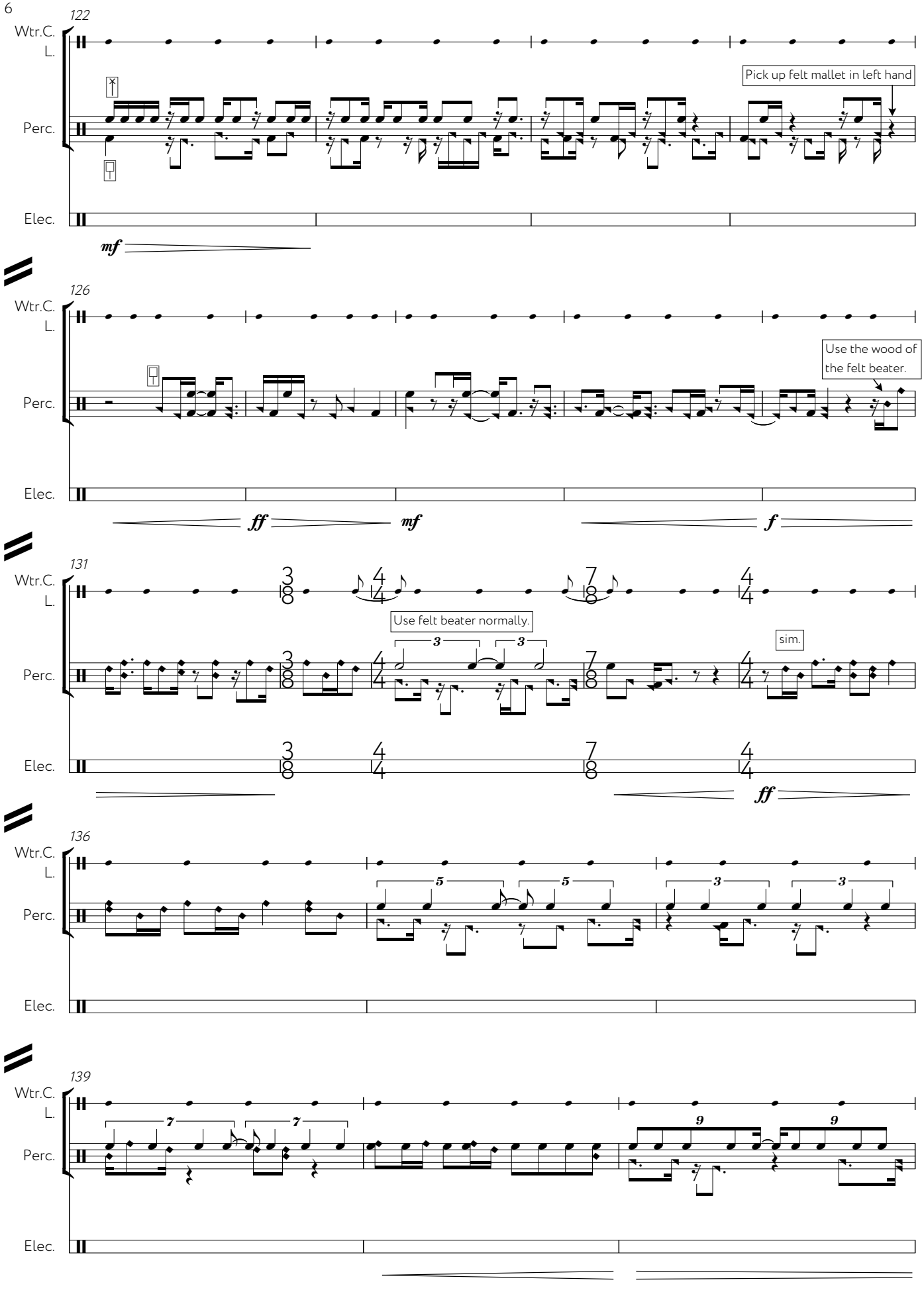


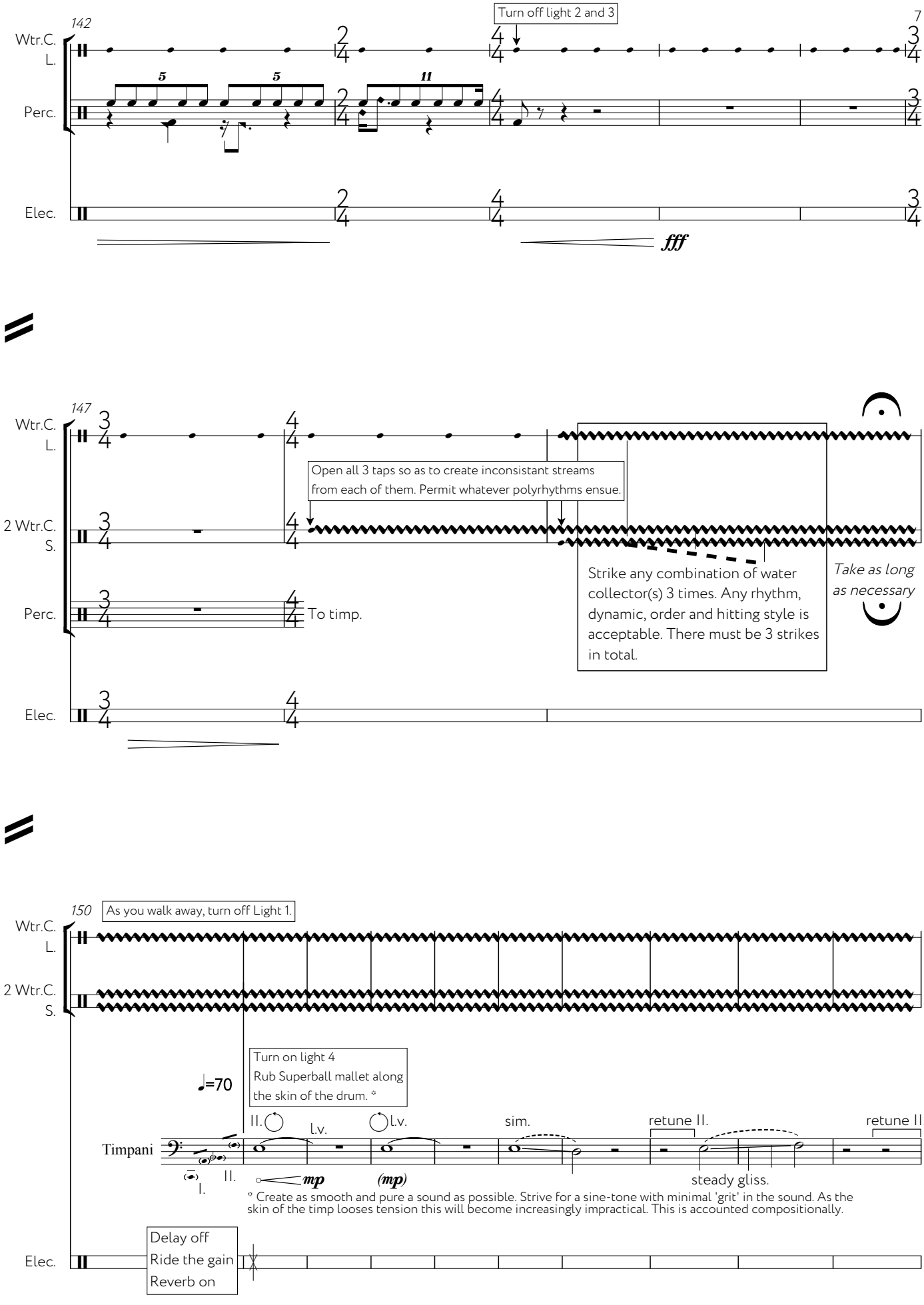

Close tap further to only allow droplets. Focus in on a spead of droplets that is both regular and will act as an appropriate crotchet speed.
15
Wtr.C. L.
2 Wtr.C. S.
Perc.
Elec.
=ca. 140-160
Strike any combination of water collector(s) 3 times. Any rhythm, dynamic, order and hitting style is acceptable. There must be 3 strikes in total.
Turn off light 2.
f
allow note to break but maintain motion
Take as long as necessary
=ca. 140-160
Reverb on full
p
20
Turn on light 2.
Pick up bamboo beater with LH. (Continue using RH to rub on wine glass rim).
Bamboo beater
f
mp
mf
28
pp
36
mp

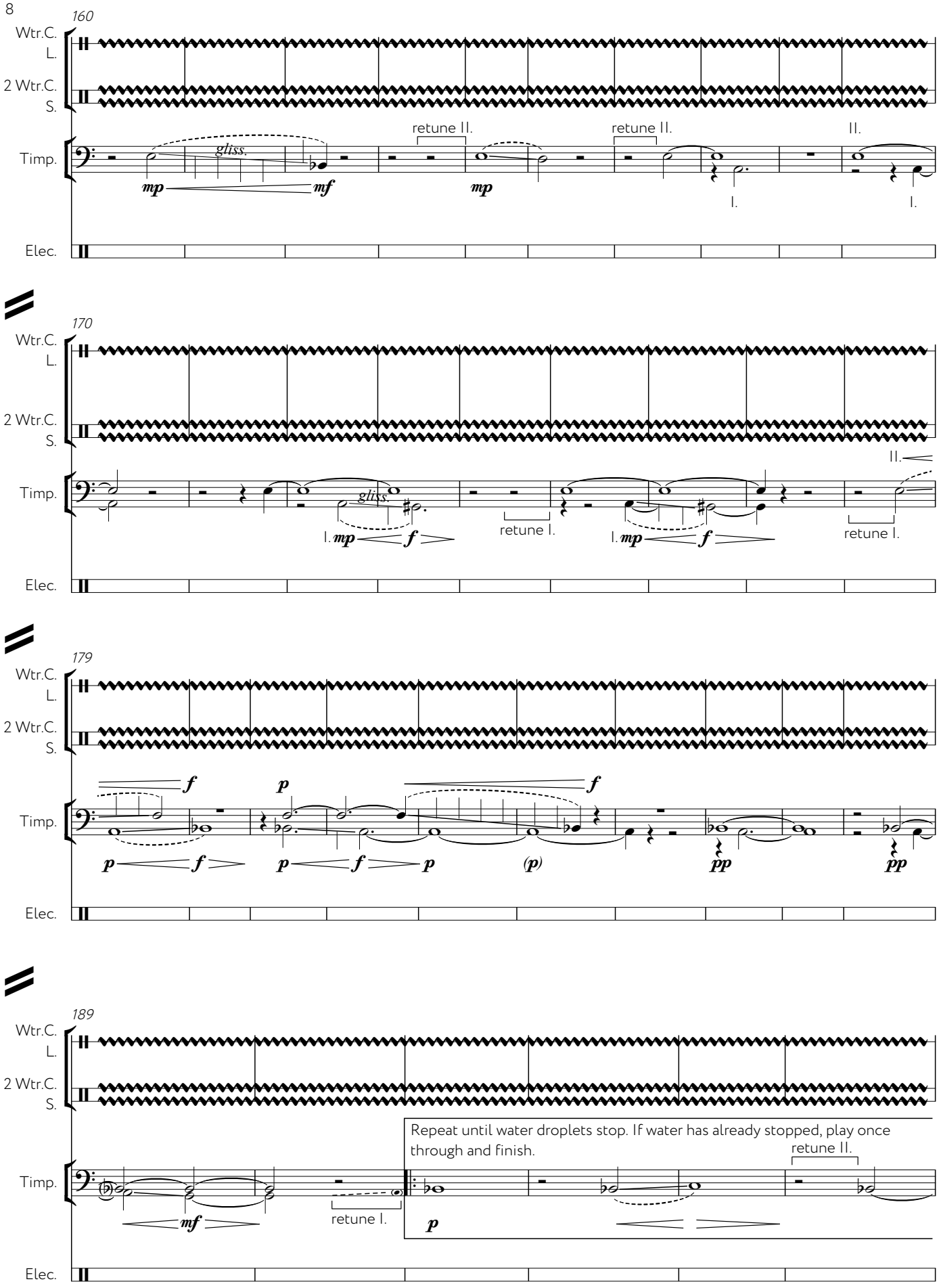

44
Wtr.C.
L.
Perc.
f mp
f mp
Slowly fade in Delay
Elec.
mf
52
Wtr.C.
L.
Perc.
mf
Elec.
mf
60
Wtr.C.
L.
Pick up bamboo beater in RH.
Perc.
p
cresc.
Elec.
p
mf
p
67
Wtr.C.
L.
Perc.
Fade in delay feedback
Elec.
73
Wtr.C.
L.
Perc.
(cresc.)
Elec.


79
Wtr.C.
L.
Perc.
(mp cresc.)
Elec.
mf
85
Wtr.C.
L.
Perc.
(cresc.)
mf dim.
Elec.
90
Wtr.C.
L.
Perc.
(mp dim.)
(p dim.)
Elec.
f
95
Wtr.C.
L.
Perc.
pp cresc.
Elec.
99
Wtr.C.
L.
Perc.
p cresc.
Elec.
cresc.


103
Wtr.C.
L.
Perc.
mp cresc.
Elec.
107
Wtr.C.
L.
Perc.
mf cresc.
Elec.
110
Wtr.C.
L.
Perc.
f cresc.
Elec.
113
Extend as long as necessary
Wtr.C.
L.
Play with LH only, slowly pick up
felt beater in RH.
molto rall.
Turn on light 3
Perc.
ff
cresc.
(fff)
3
3
molto rall.
Elec.
ff
118
Wtr.C.
L.
Felt mallet in right hand playing the lower line (M. Sheet and plates)
Bamboo beater in left hand playing upper line (Jug)
Perc.
Elec.


122
Wtr.C.
L.
Perc.
Elec.
Pick up felt mallet in left hand
mf
126
Use the wood of the felt beater.
ff
mf
f
131
Use felt beater normally.
sim.
ff
136
139


142
7
Turn off light 2 and 3
Wtr.C.
L.
Perc.
Elec.
fff
147
Wtr.C.
L.
2 Wtr.C.
S.
Perc.
Elec.
Open all 3 taps so as to create inconsistant streams
from each of them. Permit whatever polyrhythms ensue.
To timp.
Strike any combination of water collector(s) 3 times. Any rhythm, dynamic, order and hitting style is acceptable. There must be 3 strikes in total.
Take as long as necessary
150
As you walk away, turn off Light 1.
Wtr.C.
L.
2 Wtr.C.
S.
Turn on light 4
Rub Superball mallet along the skin of the drum. *
♩=70
Timpani
II.
I.
l.v.
mp
(mp)
sim.
retune II.
steady gliss.
* Create as smooth and pure a sound as possible. Strive for a sine-tone with minimal 'grit' in the sound. As the skin of the timp looses tension this will become increasingly impractical. This is accounted compositionally.
Elec.
Delay off
Ride the gain
Reverb on


160
Wtr.C. L.
2 Wtr.C. S.
Timp.
Elec.
gliss.
mp
mf
retune II.
mp
retune II.
II.
I.
I.
170
gliss.
I. mp
f
retune I.
I. mp
f
II.
retune I.
179
f
p
f
p
f
p
p
f
p
(p)
pp
pp
189
mf
retune I.
p
Repeat until water droplets stop. If water has already stopped, play once through and finish.
retune II.

195
Wtr.C.
L.
2 Wtr.C.
S.
Timp.
Elec.
Turn off light 4.
pp
mf
pp